



VERTIGO

VERTIGO #20 is the 19th issue of the Official Organ of the Carolina Fan Federation. This issue is to promote the January 27, 1974 Durham mini-con. Editor, typesetter: Edwin L. Murray, 2540 Chapel Hill Rd, Durham, NC 27707. Publisher, staff artist: Randy Williams, 424 Montrose, Apt C, Greensboro, N.C. 27407. Price: 35¢ or trade. For directions call: (919) 489-6239. This issue published January 5, 1974.

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FOLKS AROUND HERE

WORSE THINGS WAITING by Manly Wade Wellman is finally out from Carcosa after a long series of delays. It is a very attractive book and well worth the \$9.50 price tag and the long delay. The address for Carcosa is P O Box 1064, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. . . Many of our area fen are on the move so we have a long list of address changes this time. New addresses include: Michael Dobson, 18608 Clover Hill Lane, Olney, Md 20832. Pat Gabriele, 1715 Voorhees Ave, Brooklyn, N.Y. Paul Harwitz, P O Box 3841, Durham, N.C. 27702. Guy H. Lillian III, 930 Carr St. #3, Greensboro, NC 27403. Betty Stinson, 225 Woodburn Rd, Raleigh, NC 27605. Randy Williams, 424 Montrose, Apt C, Greensboro, N.C. 27407. . . There was a long article on Manly Wade Wellman on the first page of the Features section of the Oct 30, 1973 Durham Morning Herald. . . Paul Harwitz continues to sell regularly to Playboy After Hours. He has been in every issue for eight or nine months now. . . "Conchy On The Half-Shell" is now out from Tempo Books (Grosset & Dunlap) for 75¢. If you can find a store that carries it you are lucky. If not you can order it from: Conchy #1, c/o The Charlotte News, P O Box 360, Charlotte, NC 28201 for \$1 by mail. The book is an abridged version of "Conchy: Man Of The Now" with some strips left out and some new ones added. Among the new ones is the ever popular devil sequence. "Conchy" appears very irregularly in the N.Y. Sunday News. At least one has appeared so far. The Papers in Fayetteville, NC and Rocky Mount, NC and Lexington, Ky have dropped "Conchy." The Winston-Salem Sentinel and the Miami News have picked it up. The M.F. Guardian had another interview with James Childress in #27. . . We received a very attractive Christmas card from Dick Moores, artist on the "Gasoline Alley" daily strip and another of the fine cartoonists who live in this area. . .

under the elm tree

THIS ISH Dept

This issue is being put together on a rush basis so it may not be up to the standards of past issues. With my new work schedule (11:00 PM to 7:00 AM) I'm finding it hard to find time for all the things I have to do. As a result I put off getting this issue together just a little too long. My brother Terry is helping out on the typing this time by doing some of the pages that are straight copying and don't need revision. Please excuse any mistakes on his part as he very seldom types and never before for publication. As it is I will probably have to go 48 hours without sleep to get the issue together and out. With luck I won't put off next issue for so long.

THE OLD SAME TIME Dept

Durham mini-con XXII will be held on Sunday January 27, 1974 at 2540 Chapel Hill Road. As usual there will be no program so there will be plenty of time for buying/selling, talking, typing, etc. There will be refreshments but no luncheon. For those of you who are so inclined there is a Hardee's within walking distance. We don't charge admission but do have a jar for contributions. The money goes to cover VERTIGO, the refreshments, and the official con pictures. Anyone needing directions to the con should call (919) 489-6239.

GAS SHORTAGE Dept

We are very aware that there is a gas shortage and that this may make Sunday travel a hardship for some. This time will be a test of sorts to see how the shortage affects attendance, how available gas is along the routes in from many of the outlying areas, and whether drastic measures would be justified. If the situation gets very bad we may have to switch the Spring and Summer cons to Saturdays instead of Sundays. As things are now, however, the next con is set for Sunday April 7. We would like to hear from each of you as to whether Sunday cons will create a hardship because of gas or whether a switch to Saturday would be more of a problem.

LAST TIME AROUND Dept

Durham mini-con XXI was held at the old same place on October 7, 1973. Over 50 people attended, down some from last summer but still a respectable showing. James Archanbault came down from Virginia with a great load of comics and pulps for sale. Pat Gabriele came down from N.Y. to attend the con and brought some original art and comics. Ralph Margolius brought a couple of recent comics we had missed. Among those in attendance were: Pat Gabriele, Tag Gibson, Ralph Margolius, Tim Blenkarn, Anthony & Tim Frazier, James Hubbard, George Whitaker, Bill Starnes, Sam Hutchens, M C Goodwin, Mark & Alan Upchurch, David Williamson, Robert Rubin, Milton Read, Louie Brown, James & Rachel Archanbault, Richard & Mildred Minter, Jerry Minter, Clay Kimball, Ron Myers, Gilbert Ferris, Randy Vana, Scott & Linda Whiteside, Betty Stinson, Lois Ball, Richard Hurt, Bruce Arthurs, Ned Brooks, Eric Ferguson, Len Nash, Tim Marion, Jimmy & Sharon Wade, George Deahn, Edwin Vance, Bob Nelson, Steve Hoffius, Ben & Benji Brown, Steve Turner, Karl Wagner, Dave Drake, Eric Larsen, Stuart Schiff, Arlan Andrews, Tom Long, Vance Parrish, elm, & Terry.

LOST AND FOUND Dept

Almost every mini-con someone leaves something and never bothers to write us afterwards to inquire whether it has been found. We now have a couple of paperbacks, some comics, and an s-f magazine that people have left the past couple of cons. Write us or claim them in the Found box at the mini-con if we have something you lost. Among the lost items are two bags of our comics that were gotten out to show someone some items. Among the comics missing are about 15 Action Comics before #100 (including #28, #32, #23, #73-74, #77-81), two or three Leadings, a couple of early Superboy, a handful of Marvel Family, and maybe a couple more. These may have gotten mixed in with someone else's stuff so if you had a lot of stuff at the con check it to see if there were some items mixed in that aren't yours. A list can be provided to anyone who thinks he may have found them.

SON OF FOLKS AROUND HERE Dept

You can add Brant Parker to the list of prominent cartoonists who live in the NC-Va area. The creator of "Wizard of Id" and James Childress are good friends as evidenced by the Parker forward to the "Cenchy" books and the guest appearance of Bung in the "Cenchy" strip a few weeks back. . .Terry's CITY MACHINE painting is back on loan to Kelly Freas so that it may be included in a new selection of prints. . .Bob Zscheische, editorial cartoonist for the Greensboro Daily News, used to assist Frank King on "Gasoline Alley." In 1956 he switched over to the Sundays with Bill Perry when Dick Moores joined the fold. How many of you knew that "Gasoline Alley" had so many roots in NC? . . .CARTOONIST Profiles #20 featured a 4 page autobiography by Richmond News Leader editorial cartoonist Jeff MacHelly. The Pulitzer Prize winner got much of his early experience at UNC in Chapel Hill. . .

PAPER SHORTAGE Dept

The paper shortage has hit the comic strip and comic book worlds hard. Drastic changes have hit both worlds. Many newspapers have cut down the size of their dailies from four columns to three columns, and some have gone even farther. Not as many papers as you might think have done this but the fact that some did panicked King Features into requesting that many of their strips be drawn for three columns now. This means less art and larger lettering. Another problem is in the Sunday section where reductions are just as drastic. Some papers have dropped some strips but the reaction of many is to fit the same number of strips into fewer pages. This means the virtual elimination of many half-pages as most strips are now carried as thirds. Some papers shrink the strips so they can fit four or more onto a single page. It is getting increasingly harder to find desirable Sunday papers. Comic books are also affected by the paper shortage. Charlton has had to suspend all activities for two months due to lack of paper. National dropped the following titles due to the paper shortage: JIMMY OLSEN, LOIS LANE, SUPERGIRL, WEIRD WORLDS, KORAK, PREZ, FORBIDDEN TALES OF DARK MISSION, SECRETS OF SINISTER HOUSE, CHAMPION SPORTS, SECRET ORIGINS, and WEIRD WESTERN. To replace them a number of books will be upped to 100 pages and 60¢. THESE SUPERHERO FAMILY will feature Olsen, LL, and Supergirl in a combination of new material and reprints. Other 100 pagers will be JLA, WORLD'S FINEST, BRAVE & BOLD, SHAZAM, TARZAN, HOUSE OF MYSTERY, and UNEXPECTED. The Korak & Carson strips will be moved over to TARZAN. JLA will have JSA & 7 Soldiers of Victory stories in the back. The shortage has had no marked effect at Marvel yet according to most sources.

NEWSSTAND SHORTAGE Dept

Distribution is one of the major headaches for all fans, especially those in Durham. True, we get WEIRD TALES and another item or two that are absent elsewhere but the situation has deteriorated so much in the past year that now costly trips to Raleigh are the only way to insure that items are not missed. A year ago you could get all the comics, mags, and paperbacks with one stop at Sherry's, the newsstand in town. Six months ago you could get most of them there and supplement it with just one or two more stops. Now Sherry's has been empty for a month and it is near impossible to get everything without half a dozen stops in Durham and a \$1.50 trip to Raleigh. Imagine going to your "favorite" newsstand and finding all of the shelves and racks completely bare. They are in the midst of switching from a Durham distributor to a Raleigh one but that doesn't help now. At the moment there is a real "newsstand shortage" in Durham.

FOR STRIPPERS ONLY Dept

For perhaps the first time the Flash Gordon Sundays are now connected with the dailies.

We have a new paper of the month for you strip collectors. The Record-Courier of Ravenna, Ohio is published daily except for Sunday and Legal Holidays. Mail rates are \$3 a month or \$28 a year from 124 N. Chestnut St., Ravenna, Ohio 44266. Among the strips carried are non-MFG strips Apartment 3-G, Donald Duck, Archie, Jackson Twins, Koolhaie, Steve Roper, Half Hitch, Mary Worth, Hi and Lois, Fred Basset, Believe It Or Not, Wee Pals, Peanuts, and They'll Do It Every Time. MFG strips you can read early are Rip Kirby, Buz Sawyer, Juliet Jones, and Sally Bananas. This isn't a bad line-up and should be a good supplement to the MFGs.

Some of you may remember that I recommended "Woliku" in the Chicago Daily Defender a while back. "Woliku" is a unique black strip done by a young artist especially for the Defender. William E. Hayden has moved over to the undergrounds now but his work there is not as impressive as it is on his weekly strip for the Defender. He has an eleven page story in DEATH RATTLE #3 titled "The Potion."

THE STRIPPER is a "new" fanzine dedicated to comic strips that is published by the ever popular Biljo White. The first issue came out in 1964 and the second and third in 1973. Each new issue has an article on some past strip (#2 had Boots, #3 had Beetle Bailey in college), a piece or two on the collecting of strips, and some ads for comic strips. Order from Bill J. White at P.O. Box 440, Columbia, Mo 65201 for 50¢ an issue.

One strip that the MFG could pick up with little trouble when it needs to replace something is BEYOND MARS by Jack Williamson and Lee Elias, a s-f Sunday tab that was found only in the NY Sunday News in the early 1950s. It lasted three years and should be available in its entirety. ALGOL #21 has a two page article by Jack Williamson on his Sectec stories and 3/4 of the second page was devoted to BEYOND MARS. There is also a full page sample of the strip from 1952. Under the sample we are told that anyone interested in reprinting the strip should write: Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate Inc., 220 E. 42 St., New York, NY 10017, Attn: Thomas Darsey, Sales Manager. Maybe someone should take the hint. The strip was created by the Sunday News to compete with TV and to give it an edge over the competing papers. Other papers wanted the strip by the News kept exclusive rights and finally dropped it due to high production costs and jealousy from the OTHERS over job conflicts. We could do worse than this strip and I am sure it would help draw subscribers.

Since last issue there have been at least three big developments in the newspaper reprint scene. First of all, FAVORITE FUNNIES was dropped with no warning after only 12 issues due to the paper shortage. All subscriptions and some of the strips were transferred over to to VINTAGE FUNNIES. The combination is not the best they could have had. The strips carried over were Erick Bradford, Phantom, Bringing Up Father, and Little Nemo. New strips added during the merger were Popeye Sundays, Mickey Mouse, and Kube Goldberg's Side Show. Sorely missed are Alley Oop and Speed Saunders from FF, two of the better strips from that paper. Oop was the best strip and the major reason we got FF. Also missing is the much advertised SKYMASTERS strip but they promise some big strip later so this may be it. Unhappily half of Terry & the Pirates was dropped in the shuffle. We no longer have two pages an issue but instead have the dailies one week and the Sunday the next. Sure, Terry is expensive but it is also the top draw in the paper. I don't mind seeing some of the strips go and am glad to see the addition of Popeye and Mickey but there could have been more consideration for the fans. We all know that Alan Light is famous for promising one thing and delivering another. Let us hope that another expansion is in line to pick up some of the strips that should be in the paper now.

PHOENIX is past due but all papers seem to be late in getting started so I'm not really worried yet. The price is rather high for the number of strips promised and the only thing that makes it worthwhile is the quality of the strips and the promise of rapid expansion. With luck the first issue will come out while they can still run the New Atlantis Rip Kirby story.

YESTERDAY'S COMICS is a new zine from the publishers of NOSTALGIA NEWS and REMEMBER WHEN. Promised are Big Ben Bolt (Sundays & dailies) from the beginning and Buz Sawyer (dailies) from 1953. Also promised are reprints from comic books beginning with the 12 part Capt. Marvel vs. Mr. Mind's Monster Society of Evil. If they deliver it will be good but I am waiting to see what DC does about the many proposed fan reprints of old DC, Quality, and Fawcett comics. In any case, the price is 5 issues for \$3.75 and 10 for \$7. Order from YESTERDAY'S COMICS, 1830 Highland Dr, Carrollton, Texas 75006.

News News News News News News News News News News News News News News
 Wrightson leaving Swamp Thing for personal reasons. . .Metal Men & BM, Aquaman & BM future B&B teams. . .Dr Strange gets own mag with first issue #184 to run concurrently with Strange Tales. . .Iron Fist in Marvel Premiere. . .Marvel Two-In-One #4 has Thing-Capt America-Guardians of the Galaxy. . .Warren is coming out with a Spirit magazine featuring 8 stories including one with Corben color. . .Jim Baen is now editor of IF as Ejler Jakobsson concentrates on GALAXY . . .ohn got a day off and was able to go only 36 hours instead of 48 for this issue. . .Kandy Williams insists on bringing some slides for sale to the next mini-con. . .He says slides included will be from "Westworld," "2001," "Lady & the Tramp," "The Graduate," "The Cheerleaders," and others. He also has copies of Nifty Adventure Funnies left over. . .

OCTOBER 30, 1938: A MARTIAN INVASION

by Eric Larsen

The Sunday edition of The New York Times has always been very thick. Sunday, October 30, 1938 was no exception. It is therefore easy to see how over a million readers missed the small entry on the page containing the radio programming which read: "8:00; WABC-Play, H.G. Wells' War of the Worlds, With Orson Welles." These one million-plus people would regret not having read that announcement by the time the night was over.

This play was being enacted by CBS's Mercury Theatre on the Air, which featured Orson Welles. The story, taken from H.G. Wells' novel The War of the Worlds, was a simple one. It was the recounting of an invasion of Earth by men from Mars. The Martians landed on Earth in flaming meteor-like space ships; and soon, in a series of lopsided battles; destroyed Earth's defenses. The Martians then assumed rule of the planet. However, this victory was short-lived as the Martians began to drop dead by the score. The final victor in this war turned out to be the microscopic germs and bacteria in the Earth's atmosphere. Mars' atmosphere had no such disease carriers; therefore, the Martians had no immunity to the Earth's. The human race, after the last Martian had died, began the task of rebuilding their world.

Because of the simplicity of the story line of The War of the Worlds, the man doing the adaptation for a radio play needed to make use of some unusual presentation method to hold the audience's attention. This man, Howard Koch, decided to present the first part of the play as a series of news reports, describing the Martians landing, defeating the Army and Air Force, and apparent conquest of Earth. The second half of the play, Koch wrote as a narration by one of the survivors (played by Orson Welles) describing the decline of the Martian invaders.

The public's reaction to the Mercury Theatre on the Air's presentation of "War of the Worlds" was immediate and intense. When the program had been on the air for just a few minutes, and the Martians were only beginning to emerge from their spaceships --heat rays blazing and poison gas flowing-- , switchboards at newspapers, radio stations, and police buildings were beginning to light up with calls from frightened listeners. As the horrors and size of the Martian invasion grew, so did the number of callers. Soon, CBS was so swamped with calls that even the New York police could not get through to find out what was happening. Callers wanted to know a variety of information, such as: "Where is a safe place to go?", "Should I go up on the roof or down to the cellar to escape the gas attacks?" and "Where can I get a gas mask?" Other people called to give advice, like: "Why don't we turn off all the lights in the city so that the Martians will miss us?". In all, the New York Times received the staggering sum of 875 calls, and the radio stations carrying the program had an increase of five-hundred percent over their regular volume of calls. The people making these calls were not just a group of frightened old ladies, either. In fact, in Newark, New Jersey hundreds of physicians and nurses phoned the police to volunteer their services and to aid the injured.

The brunt of this public assault fell on the telephone switchboard operators. They had a difficult job which they handled in several ways. One operator, before she could explain to a woman inquirer that the broadcast on WABC was fictional in nature, had the woman hang up on her after saying, "The world is coming to an end, and I have a lot to do." Soon, the operators, instead of saying, "Hello," when receiving a call, said, "It's just a radio show." For one poor girl in New York, it was her first night on the job. Remembering the extreme politeness taught to her while she was in training, she answered a person on the phone with, "I'm sorry, we haven't that information here." Her supervisor, hearing this unusual courtesy, complimented her and asked what the party wanted to know. The girl's answer was: "He wanted to know if the world was coming to an end."

The actions taken by people were even more bizarre than their telephone conversations. In Indianapolis, a woman rushed into a Sunday evening church service screaming, "New York is destroyed, it's the end of the world. You might as well go home to die. I just heard it on the radio." Services were dismissed immediately. In Harlem, instead of dismissing church, the services were transformed into end of the world prayer meetings. Two women hearing the program, called the theatre where their husbands were attending a play. The husbands were paged, and after talking with their wives on the phone, spread the word of the invasion through the theatre. Chaos descended. People stood on street corners in more than one city to get a glimpse of what was to be the greatest battle of all time between the Martians and the Earthly forces. Again, highly intelligent people were fooled as much as the general public. At Princeton University, Dr. Arthur F. Buddington, chairman of the Department of Geology, and Dr. Harry Hess, professor of geology rushed to the site where the first flaming meteor-ship was reported to have landed so that they could collect samples. North Carolina could perhaps boast one of the most unusual reactions to the broadcast. At Brevard College, students fought for phones so they could call home to have their parents come get them. In the excitement, five male students fainted.

There were some people who took the "War of the Worlds" entirely too seriously. More than twenty families on one block in Newark, New Jersey, ran out of their houses with wet towels and handkerchiefs to protect them from the Martian gas. Some went as far as to start loading their furniture on their cars in preparation for the evacuation. The frantic activity in this neighborhood was reported to the police. Immediately, an ambulance, three radio cars and a police emergency squad of eight men were dispatched with full inhalator apparatus. It turned out, of course, to be a false alarm. In a similar case, seven thousand national guardsmen were accidentally mobilized. A score of panicking people were treated at one New York hospital for shock and hysteria. At St. Michael's Hospital fifteen more people were treated likewise, some requiring sedatives and conversation with psychiatrists. In these and other hospitals, radios were switched off in intensive care wards to stop waves of heart attacks from breaking out. A man in Pittsburg arrived home during the broadcast and found his wife in the bathroom with a bottle of poison, screaming "I'd rather die this way than like that." The man finally calmed his wife; then became terrified himself as he sat down and listened to the rest of the program. Nowhere was reaction to the broadcast as extreme as it was in Peru. When the program had been translated into Spanish, it was aired there. When the terrified Peruvians found out that the program was fictional, they became enraged and burned the radio station to the ground.

In the days following the "War of the Worlds" broadcast, the letters to the editor sections of newspapers were filled with letters from people either praising or condemning the program. The writers were just about evenly divided over the issue. Samuel Tishman of Queens, New York called the broadcast "The most asinine stunt I ever heard of," and William H. Decker called it "a disgrace and an outrage." At the same time, Ted B. Davis said:

Orson Welles. . . should be given a medal for his chest instead of a boot for his pants. . . for exposing the vast number of gullible people of whom Barnum spoke so truly.

Welles himself was amazed at the reaction his program had caused and stated that he had doubts about presenting the program at all because:

It was our thought that perhaps people might be bored or annoyed at hearing a tale so improbable.

The professional editorial writers jumped in, but they were just as split over whether the "War of the Worlds" was good or bad as the rest of the public. George E. Rutheford wrote that he thought that:

The bad taste and lack of restraint in the Halloween 'joke' broadcast cannot be too harshly condemned. . . . Everybody connected with the broadcast showed complete lack of editorial discretion as well as a perverted sense of humor.

Alvin J. Bogart called the broadcast a "brilliant dramatization," and said that: Condemnation of the network for the childish hysteria and panic on the part of many listeners would place the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) on a par with those emotional and somewhat meretricious individuals who, in shame of their own credulity and panic, are now indignant and vindictive.

The St. Louis Post Dispatch perhaps put all the editorial comments in the proper perspective when it ran a political cartoon showing two martians looking down on Earth with all its problems and one remarking to the other, "I wouldn't go down there on a bet!"

Despite all the editorial comments attempting to decide what Orson Welles was trying to do or prove by airing "War of the Worlds" in the form that he did, the only person who could comment factually on that was Welles himself. His epilogue to the broadcast answered the question. It also serves as a good ending to this article.

This is Orson Welles, ladies and gentlemen, out of character to assure you that the War of the Worlds has no further significance than as the holiday offering it was intended to be. The Mercury Theatre's own radio version of dressing up in a sheet and jumping out of a bush and saying Boo! Starting now, we couldn't soap all your windows and steal all your garden gates, by tomorrow night . . . so we did the next best thing. We annihilated the world before your very ears, and utterly destroyed the Columbia Broadcasting System. You will be relieved, I hope, to learn that we didn't mean it, and that both institutions are still open for business. So good-by everybody, and remember, please, for the next day or so, the terrible lesson you learned tonight. That grinning, glowing, globular invader of your living room is an inhabitant of the pumpkin patch, and if your doorbell rings and nobody's there, that was no martian . . . it's Hallowe'en.

Edwin L. Murray
2540 Chapel Hill Road
Durham, N. C. 27707



TO:

Joe D. Siclari
1607 McCaskill Ave #4
Tallahassee, Fla. 32304

FIRST CLASS MAIL

